



Canadian  
**Hard of Hearing**  
Association  
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

## **CHHA-NL POSITION PAPER**

### **Inclusive Education (IE) for Children with Hearing Loss**

#### **Introduction**

When a child starts kindergarten there are usually feelings of excitement and apprehension for both the parent(s) and the child. Most parents are looking forward to their child having the opportunity to learn new things and meet new friends. The children are looking forward to the adventures; like finger painting, gym and music class.

Starting school for a child with reduced hearing involves a pro-active approach by parents and the education system to ensure that students needs will be met. Since March of 2009, schools in Newfoundland & Labrador have been using an Inclusive Education approach to ensure that all students feel “safe, accepted and included” (NLESD website). This approach has helped with the transition from home to school for many of the children with reduced hearing, however there is still plenty of room for improvement.

The purpose of this position paper is to provide a comprehensive definition of what Inclusive Education means to the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Newfoundland & Labrador (CHHA-NL) and its members. As well as defining Inclusive Education, this position paper will address areas that warrant additional advocacy and to stress to importance of ensuring a safe school environment at all times for students with reduced hearing.

#### **Background**

Approximately 2% of Canadian babies are born with some degree of hearing loss or will develop early progressive childhood hearing loss. (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2007). The projected enrollment in the NLESD schools for the 2015-2016 school year is approximately 52,500 children ([The Province's Student Population; www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/publications/k12/.../ch2\\_province\\_students.pdf](http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/publications/k12/.../ch2_province_students.pdf)).

When the above statistics are considered, this would project that there will be approximately 1,050 children in the school system in 2015-2016 with some degree of reduced hearing, however, most of these would not be identified or working with a teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist.

The goal of CHHA-NL, among other things, is to provide “advocacy services that promote a better quality of life for hard of hearing...in Newfoundland and Labrador,” thus advocacy for those students in the school system would be a priority area for the association.

### **What is Inclusive Education?**

In Newfoundland & Labrador, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development defines inclusive education as a philosophy that promotes:

- *the right of all students to attend school with their peers, and to receive appropriate and quality programming;*
- *a continuum of supports and services in the most appropriate setting (large group, small group, individualized) respecting the dignity of the child;*
- *a welcoming school culture where all members of the school community feel they belong, realize their potential, and contribute to the life of the school;*
- *an atmosphere which respects and values the participation of all members of the school community;*
- *a school community which celebrates diversity; and*
- *a safe and caring school environment*

<http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/inclusion.html>

### **CHHA-NL Position on Inclusive Education (IE)**

**It is the position of CHHA-NL that the Department of Education should introduce an enhanced Inclusive Education Program for children with hearing loss in Newfoundland and Labrador Schools.**

It is further recommended that the components of the Inclusive Education strategy should include, but not necessarily be limited to:

#### **1. Inclusion**

The position of CHHA-NL on Inclusive Education is that the NLESD continues to support children with reduced hearing in the areas noted above in addition to the promotion of pure inclusion and not only integration.

The difference between inclusion and integration is using an inclusive philosophy which includes use of technology and teaching techniques that ensure the student is able to participate in the discussion or event versus integration, which would be simply

physically bringing students with reduced hearing into the classroom with the main student population without any additional resources.

Inclusion would involve the use of accommodations in the classroom that would help students with becoming involved in the classroom and to help the student with the curriculum, though it should be noted that the introduction of accommodations does not guarantee inclusion.

2. **Working Group/Committee**

The position of CHHA-NL is that there should be established a working group which would comprise representatives from the Department of Education, NLESD and CHHA-NL to review the ever changing obstacles facing hard of hearing students .

The position here is that if there is a change in **ANY** policy within the school system that affects the student population, there immediately needs to be a review of how this will affect students with reduced hearing. All policies should be reviewed continually with a “disability lens” and changes should be made as necessary to ensure the needs of students with reduced hearing are met.

3. **Visual Alerts**

The position of CHHA-NL is that there should be visual alerts in all schools, regardless of the age of the student population. Schools without these visual alarms need to be accessed and all schools having a student with reduced hearing would need to have these visual alarms installed as soon as possible.

These visual alerts would alert for fire, secure school and school lockdown. This is a big task both financially and logistically, however the need is immediate. The position of CHHA-NL is that the schools with students with reduced hearing be retrofitted first and then work through the others schools, dictated by enrollment numbers of students with reduced hearing. This issue is a major safety concern for the students and schools. Steps need to be taken to ensure that students with reduced hearing are provided with training so they are informed about, and understand the various alerts used by the school, and are able to respond appropriately to them.

## **Conclusion**

Inclusive education is very important to students with reduced hearing. The need to feel included, involved, and safe is what creates a productive and memorable school experience. With the implementation of the initiatives out-lined above and the ongoing support of the NLESD (by providing the latest technology and teaching techniques), as well as providing a safe learning environment, students with reduced hearing in Newfoundland and Labrador will achieve their full potential.

## **APPROVAL AND COPYRIGHT INFORMATION**

**Position Paper Formally Approved by CHHA-NL Board of Directors: January 26, 2016**

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### **Association Contact Information:**

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## **General Information about CHHA-NL**

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL) is a non-profit, charitable organization committed to advocacy, awareness, prevention and the provision of programs and services that promote a better quality of life for hard of hearing and late-deafened people of all ages and their families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

CHHA-NL was founded in 1984 under the name of the Newfoundland Hearing Association (NHA). In 1994, the NHA became the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-Newfoundland Chapter (CHHA-NC) when it became part of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA). In 2002, when the province changed its official name to Newfoundland and Labrador, the association changed accordingly to its current name of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL).

The association is run by and for hard of hearing people of the province. Its operations are guided and conducted through the efforts of a Board of Directors, seven full-time staff, and volunteers. While it has a paid membership of all ages, the association provides a diversified program of support services to its members and the public at large.

To obtain additional information about the association, or to request a copy of the association's Annual Report, including information related to the ongoing operations of the association (financial, fundraising, strategic plans, types and delivery of programs and services), please contact the Executive Director, Leon Mills, at (709) 753-3224 (voice), by fax (709) 753-5640, by cell (709) 689-8239 or by e-mail at [lmills@chha-nl.ca](mailto:lmills@chha-nl.ca).